

# THE Spiritual Magazine.

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## SPIRITUALISM AMONGST THE "FRIENDS."

By THOMAS BREVIER.

PERHAPS no Protestant Church has been more fruitful of spiritual experiences than the Society of Friends, or Quakers as they were early called, from their frequent trembling or quaking under spiritual influence, as is often the case with mediums at the present day, and as has often been noticed in those who are "stricken" at Revivals, and as, indeed, has at all times been a concomitant of any marked outpouring of spiritual power; mind and body being sympathetically related, and both open in various degrees to spirit influence and control.

It was because the early Friends so fully recognised a spiritual guidance and teaching which they felt to be holy and divine, that they have no professional or "man-made" ministry. They patiently "wait for the spirit" ere they open their lips in prayer, warning, or exhortation; and if the word is not given to them in their meeting, they worship in silence, and then depart. They recognise that not only in their "meeting houses" and in "first days," but in all places and at all times, they may be thus the subjects of spiritual impressions which, especially in relation to external acts, or communications to be imparted to or affecting others, they technically call "concerns;" whilst mental illumination or spiritual revealings of truth to the soul they term "openings." They talk much of "the Christ within," and of "the inward light," which they place above all outward authority. Such, at least, was the case with the Friends in the earlier and better periods of their history.

No doubt much of this has become merely technical and formal, as indeed all words and acts become when the faith they once expressed has become faint and dim; and if in our

day the Friends bear but feeble testimony to those great spiritual truths to which their predecessors clung with such tenacity, and for which they bore with persecution so heroically, it need not surprise us that their power and influence has correspondingly declined, and there is no need for prize essays to tell them the reason why.

Viewed in the light of modern Spiritualism, the literature of the Friends, especially their early literature, is particularly interesting and instructive. A goodly volume in illustration of Spiritualism among the Friends might be compiled from published sources alone. The Journals of George Fox, the founder of the society, might be called, like the records of some of Swedenborg's experience, a *Spiritual Diary*. It abounds with instances of trance, vision and interior illuminations, of speaking, healing, exorcising, and discovering men's secret thoughts under the spiritual power. The prophetic visions of Joseph Hoag, especially his vision of the late civil war in America, have been already instanced in this Magazine,\* as have also been the remarkable illustrations of Divine Providence and supernatural power in the life of Richard Sellars, and which read almost like a chapter from the Acts of the Apostles;† while the case of poor James Nayler shows that even the Friends, with all their sobriety, intelligence, and good sense, were not wholly free from the infestation of fanatical, disorderly spirits, or that the manifestations were at all events of that character.‡

A somewhat more particular and detailed reference to a few instances, will perhaps set the subject of this article in a clearer light.

#### JOHN WOOLMAN.

John Woolman was constantly wrought upon by a concern for the knowledge of the interest he had in the Divine life; and he tells us that once, in the year 1757, when in good health, going to bed about the usual time, he awoke in the night, meditating on the goodness and the mercy of God. He then went to sleep again. In a short time he awoke. It was yet dark, and no appearance of day or of moonshine; and, as he opened his eyes, he saw a light in his chamber, at the apparent distance of five feet, about nine inches in diameter, of a clear, rosy brightness, and near its centre the most radiant. He says:—“As I lay still, looking upon it without any surprise, words were spoken to mine inward ear which filled my whole inward man. They were not the effort of thought, nor any conclusion in relation to the appearance, but as the language of the Holy

\* *Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. VI., p. 18. † *Ibid*, Vol. II., p. 402, N.S.

‡ *Ibid*, Vol. III., pp. 442, 503, N.S.

One spoken in my mind. The words were, '*Certain evidence of Divine Truth.*' They were again repeated, exactly in the same manner, and then the light disappeared."

This was not the only instance in which he seems to have been conducted in trance to "visions and revelations." On another occasion, in a time of sickness, he was brought so near the gates of death that he forgot his name. Being desirous to know who he was, he saw a mass of a dull, gloomy colour, between the South and East, and he was informed that it was a mass of human beings, in as great misery as they could be. He was told that he was mixed with them, and that henceforth he must not consider himself as a distinct and separate being. Thus he remained several hours, when he heard a soft, melodious voice, more pure and harmonious than any he had ever before heard. It was, he believed, the voice of an angel, who spoke to other angels, and the words were, "John Woolman is dead." Then he remembered that *he* was John Woolman; and being assured that he was alive in the body, he greatly wondered what the heavenly voice could mean. He could not doubt the voice of the angel, and yet he could not unlock the mystery. Then in his trance he beheld the mines, where the poor oppressed people were digging rich treasures for those who oppressed them, and they knew that those who oppressed them were Christians, and the name of Christ was blasphemed among them. The song of the angel, however, remained yet a mystery. In the morning, his wife coming to his bedside, he asked if they knew who he was. They told him "John Woolman;" but thought that he must be light-headed to propose such a question. He never told them what the angel had said, nor was he disposed to talk to anyone; he desired rather to be still, that he might understand the mystery. At length he felt a divine power within him, although his tongue had been so dry that he could not speak, and then he said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And then the mystery was opened, and he perceived there was joy in heaven over a sinner who had repented, and that the language, "John Woolman is dead," meant no more than the death of his own will. And his vision of the miners received its elucidation, too; for he saw that people setting off their tables with silver vessels at entertainments were often stained with worldly glory, and that, in the present state of things, it became a duty to be careful how he fed himself out of such vessels. Going to a monthly meeting soon after his recovery, he dined at a Friend's house, where drink was brought in silver vessels, and not in any

other. Requiring something to drink, he told his experience, even with weeping, and, of course, had his request complied with. These are extraordinary illustrations of a tender conscience; a heart feelingly alive to the teachings of duty.

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THOMAS SAY.

A compilation of the writings of Thomas Say, with a memoir of him, was published in Philadelphia in 1796. My attention was first directed to the work by my friend, Professor Gunning, of Boston, who told me that, from personal enquiries, he had found that in the older Quaker families of Philadelphia the memory of Thomas Say was still cherished for his strict probity, sincere piety, and blameless life. In their youth his visions were the frequent subject of conversation.

Thomas Say was born in Philadelphia in 1709; his grandfather and grandmother came over with William Penn. Thomas Say was a member of the Friends' Church, and highly esteemed for his benevolent disposition, genuine piety, and consistent life. He held offices of public trust, was guardian to a great number of orphan children, and zealously supported schools for black children as well as white ones. He had some reputation as a speaker. He had trances, visions, and possessed the gift of healing. His biographer, after affirming that he "could cure wens, remove tumours, and other afflictive diseases, by stroking with the hand," says that "however some might ridicule this, it was a *fact*, in proof of which many living testimonies could be produced." Fastings and secret prayer ever proved efficacious in opening his inner sight, enabling him to behold the marvellous glories of the heavenly world. One of his spiritual experiences is thus related:—

"On the ninth day, between the hours of four and five, I fell into a trance, and so continued till about the hour of three or four the next morning. After my departure from the body (for I *left the body*), my father and mother, Susannah Robinson, and others who watched me shook my body, felt for my pulse, and tried if they could discern the remains of any life or breath in me, but found none. Some may be desirous to know whether I was laid out or not.

"I found myself, when I opened my eyes, laying on my back, as is a corpse on a board; and was told after getting better, that I was not laid on a board, because mother could not find freedom to have it done. They then sent for Dr. Kearsly, who attended me, for his opinion. He found no pulse nor any remains of life; but as he was going away, returned again, and

said that something came into his mind to try further. He then asked for a small looking-glass, which Catherine Souder, who lived with my father, procured. The doctor placing it over my mouth a short time, there appeared on it a little moisture. The doctor then said to them, 'If he is not dead, I think he is so far gone that he will never open his eyes again; let him lie while he continues warm, and when he begins to grow cold, lay him out.'

"This they told me when I returned into the body. Upon hearing me speak, they were all very much surprised; the second time I spoke they all rose from their chairs, and the third time they all came to me. My father and mother inquired how it had been with me? I answered and said unto them, I thought I had been dead and gone to heaven. After I left my body, I heard as it were the voices of men, women, and children, singing songs of praises unto the Lord God without intermission, which ravished my soul and threw me into transports of joy. My soul was also delighted with most beautiful glades and gardens, which appeared to me on every side, and such as were never seen in this world. Through these I passed, being all clothed in white, and *in my full shape*, without the least *diminution of parts*. As I passed along toward a higher state of bliss, I cast my eyes (being perfectly conscious) upon the earth, which I saw plainly, and beheld three men (whom I knew) die. Two of them were white men, one of which entered into immediate rest. There appeared a beautiful transparent gate opened; and as I and the one that entered into rest came up to it, he stepped in; but as I was about to enter I stepped into the body.

"When recovering from my trance, I mentioned the names of these persons, telling how I saw them die, and which of them entered into rest. I said to my mother, 'Oh that I had made one step further, then I should not have come back to earth.' After telling them what I had to say, I desired them to say no more, for I still heard the voices and melodious songs of praises, and longed for my final change.

"After I told them of the death of the three men, they sent to see if it was so; and when the messenger returned, he told them they were all dead, and died in their rooms, &c., as I had told them. Upon hearing it, I fell into tears, and said, 'Oh, Lord, wouldst thou hadst kept me, and sent him back that was in pain!' (for he seemed one of the lost). The third was a coloured man belonging to the widow Kearney, whom I saw die in the brick kitchen; and while they were laying his corpse on a board, his head fell out of their hands, which I plainly saw with other circumstances—for, remember, the *walls were no hindrance to my sight*. Though the negro's body was black, his

soul was clothed in white, which filled me with joy, as it appeared to me a token of his acceptance with God. \* \* \* Yet I was not permitted to see him fully enter into rest; but just as I thought myself entering, I came into the body again.

"Some time after my recovery, the widow Kearney, the mistress of the coloured man, sent for me, and inquired whether I thought departed spirits knew one another? I answered in the affirmative, telling her I saw her negro man die whilst I was lying as a corpse. She then asked me, 'Where did he die?' I told her, 'In her brick kitchen, between the jamb of the chimney and the wall; and when they took him from the bed to lay him on the board, his head slipped from their hands.' She then said, '*So it did!*' She then asked if I could tell where they laid him. I informed her, between the back door and street door. She said she remembered that *it was so*, and was satisfied, having reason to believe what she had often thought that departed spirits knew each other in heaven.

"These men, upon inquiring, were found to die at the very time I saw them, and all the circumstances of their death were found to be exactly as I related them. As some may desire to know how or in what shape those that were dead appeared to me, I would say, *that they appeared each in a complete body*, which I take to be the spiritual body separated from the earthly, sinful body. They were also *clothed*—the two that entered into rest in white, and the other, who was seemingly cast off, had his garment *somewhat white, but spotted*. I saw also the bodies in which each of them lived when upon earth, and also how they were laid out; but my own body I did not see. The reason why I neither saw my own body, nor entered fully into rest, I take to be this: *that my soul was not quite separated from my body*, as the others were; though it was so far separated as to permit my seeing those things, and hearing their songs of praise and thanksgiving. Some may think the dead know not each other. These I would refer to the Scriptures—asking, did not Dives know both Abraham and Lazarus, though afar off?"

Though Thomas Say lived to be an old man, it was universally remarked by those who knew him, that after this vision he walked through life like a traveller desirous to reach his home. He discharged all domestic and social duties in a manner eminently exemplary; but the other world was to him the *reality*, and this world the shadow. His temperate habits and simple life kept his mental faculties and inner vision unimpaired to the end.

ISAAC T. HOPPER.

Isaac T. Hopper was a Friend, widely known and respected as a reformer and philanthropist, as a friend of the poor and the oppressed, and especially for his noble efforts and sacrifices for the abolition of negro slavery. His Life, written by Lydia Maria Child, is a most valuable biography, and replete with interest.

Friend Hopper used to mention a case where a strong impression had been made on his own mind, without his being able to assign any adequate reason for it. He had felt inclined to consent to assist a young man descended from a very respectable Quaker family, in a highly plausible scheme; but an impression came upon his mind so strongly, that he thought it right to be influenced by it. When the young man who had proposed the scheme expostulated, Hopper simply said, "There is no use in arguing the matter. I have no cause whatever to suspect thee of any dishonest or dishonourable intentions; but there is on my mind an impression of danger so powerful, that I cannot conscientiously have any agency in inducing coloured people to go with thee." The man turned out a hypocrite and a villain, and the warning presentiment turned out to be but too well founded.

A singular case of inward perception likewise occurred in the experience of his own mother. In her diary, which is still preserved in the family, she describes a visit to some of her children in Philadelphia, and adds—"Soon after this, the Lord showed me that I should lose a son. It was often told me, though without sound of words. Nothing could be more intelligible than this still small voice. It said, 'Thou wilt lose a son; and he is a pleasant child.'" Her son James resided with relatives in Philadelphia, and often went to bathe in the Delaware.

On one of these occasions, soon after his mother's visit, a friend who went with him sank in the water, and James lost his own life by efforts to save him. A messenger was sent to inform his parents, who lived at the distance of eight miles. While he staid in the house, reluctant to do his mournful errand, the mother was seized with sudden dread, and heard the inward voice saying, "James is drowned." She said abruptly to the messenger, "Thou hast come to tell me that my son James is drowned. Oh! how did it happen?" He was much surprised, and asked why she thought so. She could give no explanation of it, except that it had been suddenly revealed to her mind.

## JACOB LINDLEY.

In her *Life of Isaac T. Hopper*, Mrs. Child gives the following anecdote:—

“Jacob Lindley, of Chester County, was a preacher in the Society of Friends. Once when dining with his friend, Isaac T. Hopper, the conversation turned upon his religious experiences, and he related a circumstance to which he said he very seldom alluded, and never without feelings of solemnity and awe. Being seized with sudden and severe illness, his soul left the body for several hours, during which time he saw visions of heavenly glory not to be described. When consciousness began to return, he felt grieved that he was obliged to come back to this state of being, and he was never after able to feel the same interest in terrestrial things that he had felt before he obtained this glimpse of the spiritual world.”

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## DAVID SANDS.

In the *Methodist Magazine* for 1819, it is related that one David Sands, in passing with two other “Friends” through a village in the North of England, became impressed that he should hold a meeting in the village. Being harvest time, they sought to dissuade him, but he would not yield. He held a meeting. His manner of commencing created surprise and inquiry in every breast. He informed his hearers that it was impressed upon his mind, that a person among them had the instruments of death about him, and that the same person had prepared them for his own destruction. When the meeting was concluded, the person who was observed to weep came up to David Sands, drew a brace of pistols from his pocket, told them that he had prepared them for his own destruction, and that he intended to have put an end to his existence that same night.\*

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## PETER BEDFORD.

Like all genuine followers of George Fox, Peter Bedford listened for the “movings of the spirit,” and delighted to be not disobedient to what he deemed to be impressions and monitions from above. His biographer narrates several striking instances of good service done through such docility. Of this

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\* I have not the volume by me to refer to, and am a little doubtful whether the anecdote is rightly given in this connexion, or whether it more properly belongs to the Methodists, especially as these things were not unfrequent with the early Methodists. In either case the anecdote is worth preserving.



nature was an occurrence at Ramsgate. Mr. Bedford was at the sea-side with two of his nephews, intending to return home on the following Monday; but on the morning of Saturday Mr. Bedford awoke very early, with a strong impression on his mind that he must not wait till Monday, but must straightway return to London. He accordingly arose, went to the bed-rooms of his nephews, told them that they must go to London at once, partook with them of an early breakfast, and accompanied them on board the first packet for the metropolis. At home all was well, and the rest of the day passed unvaried by anything worthy of record. The doubt now arose whether, after all, he had not been played with—whether he had acted wisely in yielding to the impression. Sunday came, and still no sign. The afternoon passed, and yet nothing unusual occurred to justify his hasty removal from Ramsgate. Must it not have been a delusion? In the evening, however, he was startled, whilst at the supper-table with his friends, by a violent ringing of the door-bell. A sudden conviction came into his mind, that now he was about to learn the reason of his return to London. He left his friends at the supper-table, and went to meet his visitor in another room. A young man, pale and agitated, entered, and threw himself on a sofa. On recovering somewhat from his excitement, he told Mr. Bedford that a very near relative had just left his home and family, in most distressing circumstances, intending totally to desert them and go off to America; and he besought Mr. Bedford to use his personal influence to prevent the accomplishment of this ruinous resolve. After learning all the details of the case, Mr. Bedford returned to his friends, pleaded pressing necessity as his excuse for so abruptly leaving them, went off with the young man at once, and obtained an interview with another relative of the culprit, with whom they succeeded in making such arrangements as prevented the threatened flight to America. The delinquent was persuaded to remain in England, became penitent for the past, and peace was at last restored to his family. And thus it proved to be very fortunate for all parties that Mr. Bedford had so suddenly returned from Ramsgate.

The same class of incident appeared in the course of the relationships arising between Mr. Bedford and his quondam friend John Tawell. In the shop of a Friend, working as a porter, John Tawell, then a young man, first became known to Mr. Bedford. Though diligent and complaisant, he was not entirely liked; there was a want of openness and straightforwardness in him; and although his abilities soon raised him to a more responsible employment, and although he hoisted a large flag of religious profession, he did not altogether succeed

in making it felt that his piety was sincere. Mr. Bedford especially failed to be satisfied with him, and at length came to the conclusion that there was something very wrong underneath the specious demeanour of this man; and became moved at last with an almost irresistible impulse to tell Tawell that, though devoid of outward information or proof, he believed Tawell had committed some crime which would bring him to the gallows. Now this was a very awkward message to convey to any man, all the more to a man seemingly benevolent and religious, and Mr. Bedford might well feel disinclined to the attempt. Very seriously and long did he deliberate; but the more he thought it over, the more did he become convinced that it was no mere fancy of his own, but was a communication which ought to be obeyed. At length he resolved to act upon it, and with this design he set off towards the residence of Tawell. Passing along the City-road, he was again overtaken by misgivings; and after he had left the turnpike-bar at St. Luke's at some distance behind him, his reluctance became so strong as to cause him to turn back again. But upon reaching the bar a second time, the impression again became so vivid, that he once more resolved to be obedient to it, and he proceeded on his way to the house without further interruption. Tawell and his wife received him pleasantly. Requesting the withdrawal of Mrs. Tawell, Mr. Bedford addressed the husband in a very serious and impressive manner, and finally spoke of the mysterious but very deep impression he had received, that his auditor had been so false to his professions of religion as to commit a crime which would, if discovered, subject him to the extreme penalty of the law. Tawell received this unexpected message with astonishment and awe. He was much affected; and at length confessed that it was quite true that he had been guilty of such an offence, but he added that it was not yet too late to prevent the completion and consequences of the crime, for he had still in his possession the notes which he had forged.

After such a remarkable warning, it might have been thought that Tawell would have thoroughly repented of his crime; but, at a subsequent period of his life, the infatuated man again yielded to the like temptation, and was convicted and transported for forging bank notes by means of ingeniously forged plates. In Australia, whither he was sent, he conducted himself so well as to obtain his liberty in a few years, and his talents and industry in New South Wales soon enabled him to establish a business, and to amass a large sum of money. To ingratiate himself with religious persons, he again assumed a profession of piety—built at his own cost, a chapel for a small body of

Quakers in the colony, and presented it to them as a sign of his hearty good wishes for their spiritual interests. Having secured a competency, he at length returned to England to enjoy it.

His old friends were pleased to see his apparently penitent and satisfactory condition; and he entertained so great a respect for Mr. Bedford, that he took a house at Southend, Croydon, on purpose to be near the venerable man who had in former times been to him so faithful a monitor. After a time he removed further into the country. Unhappily, his religious profession did not prevent him from forming a criminal connection, and to escape the exposure of this he poisoned the partner of his guilt. His arrest by help of the electric telegraph, which then, for the first time, was employed as an arrestor of criminals, is still vividly remembered. Before his execution, Mr. Bedford once more visited, and had a very solemn and affecting interview with him. It is remarkable, that just before the perpetration of the act which cost him his life, Tawell received a solemn warning, though not through Mr. Bedford. At a Quakers' meeting, attended by Tawell and his wife one Sunday, as was their wont, a minister from Yorkshire was present, and to whom Tawell's position was entirely unknown. After the usual silent preliminaries, the minister rose, and delivered an address of extraordinary earnestness and solemnity. A feeling, he said, had taken possession of his mind for which he could not account, except that some one present contemplated a very wicked act; and then, proceeding in his discourse, he expressed his belief that if his warning voice now raised were not heeded, the unknown individual to whom his words applied would never again receive a similar offer of mercy and recall. Mr. Tallack (the author of the *Life of Peter Bedford*) declares that he has repeatedly heard this striking circumstance related, and has been told, that after leaving the meeting-house, Tawell's wife said, "John, what a remarkable sermon that was! Why, one would think we had a murderer amongst us!"

These are not the testimonies of obscure, ignorant fanatics; they are related with artless simplicity by men of strict veracity, enlightened philanthropy, and high Christian character. Corroborated, as they are, by like testimony in other Churches, and by hundreds of persons in our own day and in our very midst, they deserve the serious consideration of all who are interested in the study of man, and in the relations subsisting between the natural and the spiritual worlds.

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## WHAT A SPIRITUALIST THINKS OF BIBLICAL MIRACLES.\*

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By WILLIAM WHITE.

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"I CANNOT believe in miracles, and what shall I do!" exclaimed, in intellectual agony, an apprentice to the ministry of the Church of England.

"Dear heart!" replied his confidant; "then do not believe in miracles."

The penalties attached to scepticism aggravate the mischief they are designed to repress. Why should any one feel obliged to believe in miracles, or distressed, or wicked if he cannot?

When I consider how reverence for the Bible is enforced, it is difficult to refrain from excessive indignation. Protestants are never tired of saying hard things of Catholics for the invention of such dogmas as the immaculate conception of the Virgin and the infallibility of the Pope, but they seem forgetful of the fact that their own cardinal principle of an infallible Bible has as little to justify it. Nowhere in the Bible is the claim of infallibility advanced—nowhere from Genesis to the Apocalypse. The claim is a conceit of foolish men. How indeed could it be otherwise? How could a book constituted like the Bible present any such claim? As Burke observed a century ago—

"The Scripture is no one summary of doctrines regularly digested, in which a man could not mistake his way: it is a most venerable, but most multifarious collection of an infinite variety of cosmogony, theology, history, prophecy, psalmody, morality, apologue, allegory, legislature, ethics—carried through different books, by different authors at different ages, for different ends and purposes."†

How absurd to attribute the imaginary quality of infallibility to such a miscellany! Yet this fiction of infallibility is widely accepted, is allowed to oppress tender consciences, to furnish endless weapons of offence for scoffers, and to paralyse the free spirit of the writings in supposed honour whereof it was conceived.

We are frequently advised by sceptics to treat the Bible like any other book. Just so would I have it treated, and so should everybody who has any confidence in its merits. If you know

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\* A Lecture, at the Beethoven Rooms, Harley Street, on Monday evening, 30th January, 1871.

† Speech on the Acts of Uniformity.

your gold is gold, you submit it fearlessly to the assayer: if your cash account is correct, you have nothing but welcome for the auditor. For myself, I ask no favour for the Bible. Treat it as any other book; but have a care that you do indeed treat it as you would any other book, and let not the unwise claims made for it prejudice you against it. Nine-tenths of what passes for attacks on the Bible are really attacks on men's fancies about the Bible, and touch not the Bible at all. Treat the Bible as any other book, and I am confident it will acquire such respect and affection as it never commanded before. Let us ask ourselves whether if we accorded to Shakespeare the artificial reverence yielded to Moses and Paul we should not lose the ineffable aroma of his spontaneous influence—that he would not straightway mummify under our preposterous servility.

Belief is insight, and insight is born of sympathy, and sympathy is begotten in freedom. Compulsion and sympathy are irreconcilable—one is the extinction of the other. Hence God, who desires our love (because it is the means and measure of our happiness) is ever careful that we be not overawed in our relations with Him. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour," said Isaiah. Therefore when God revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, it was in a guise so humble that His rejection was easy—easy to all save spirits kindred with His own. "Whom say ye that I am?" He inquired of His disciples. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," answered Peter. Jesus said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

So it was eighteen hundred years ago: so is it to-day. "No man can come to me," said Jesus, "except the Father draw him;" and Paul iterates the truth in saying, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Not by external demonstration can we discover God, but by internal affinity. The perpetual demand for outward infallible guidance, whether papal or scriptural, is a demand which God in His wisdom and mercy will never answer. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," is the first and great commandment, but, I repeat, the prime condition of love is freedom, which God, as He values our love, can never take away.

"Love is so divine and pure a thing,  
It only takes what cannot be withheld.  
It flies constraint. All that it gives is given,  
Even as the lily renders up its perfume,  
Because it cannot help it." \*

Many a heart has been hindered from God by theological fences

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\* EPES SARGENT—"The Woman who Dared."

and pious philtres : never heart found Him save by the inward attraction of His own indefinable grace. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Hence towards the maintenance of this freedom we may endure, yea even welcome, a multitude of sceptical suggestions. It is well that we should never forget that we know Christ outwardly wholly by report, that we have not a line of His manuscript, that we have no guarantee that His words are recited as spoken, nor His deeds in the precision of occurrence. Any man, therefore, is justified in asserting, "I am not sure whether Christ said just so, or whether He did just so;" and the various and defective and doubtful readings of the four Gospels afford unquestionable warrant for such scepticism.

You may have seen a magnet drawn over a heap of heterogeneous substances and attract from out the mass the congenial iron filings. Even so a reader of the Gospels attracts therefrom whatever is suitable to himself. But the analogy is defective, inasmuch as the mind, unlike the magnet, is under the play of various forces, and what it passes over heedlessly to-day, it may attract to its service with avidity to-morrow.

Fortified by these considerations, we may approach the question of Biblical miracles with an unembarrassed spirit.

The position of the majority of those who profess to believe in Biblical miracles is of a piece with the belief in Biblical infallibility. Philosophically, it is incapable of defence ; it is no more than a pious prejudice. They will tell you with bland assurance, that the age of miracles is past—that miracles ceased with the Apostles, and that any testimony to the contrary is unworthy of regard. You may reply, that there is as good evidence for miracles subsequent to the Gospels as in the Gospels, and you will probably be commiserated as a dupe of lying wonders. Arguments with such professors are generally thrown away, else we might show that the Saviour's command to heal the sick and cast out devils is quite as imperative as to preach the Gospel.

Our Protestant infallibilists make a profession of unbounded allegiance to the Bible, and proceed to treat it with a freedom which, assumed in a different fashion by Thomas Paine and Theodore Parker, they denounce as blasphemous. "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible!" is their cry ; but it has often appeared to me, that so much of the Bible as they are practically related to, might be comprised in a pamphlet of moderate dimensions. Their theology is based on a number of texts, arbitrarily selected, many used in senses at

variance with their context, and over these fragments they incessantly patter, until all natural force is trodden out of them. Take at random any of the tracts they put into our hands as we go along the streets, and ten to one it is an adjuration to wash in Christ's precious blood. I have nothing to say against the advice. The blood of Christ is symbolic of the truth He revealed, and by that truth we are spiritually cleansed and invigorated. What I complain of is, that we should be afflicted with the sanguinary iteration as if it were the whole Gospel. Why should we never hear of drinking the Saviour's blood as well as of washing in it, and still more of eating His flesh? Are not these His words?—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him. He that eateth me shall live by me." I almost shrink from citing a passage so profoundly sacred, but it would be difficult to convey in a sentence a more effectual impression of the narrow Biblical foothold that popular theology has, which is asserted to be nothing if not Biblical.

Every now and then small sects are formed for the revival of Biblical testimonies which have fallen into neglect. Thus we hear of the Peculiar People, who act upon the advice of Apostle James, and when any among them is sick call upon their elders to pray over the sufferer, anointing him with oil, in the confident expectation that the Lord will raise him up.

Some time ago a girl died under this peculiar treatment, just as it is likely she would have died under the doctors, and the elders were summoned before Mr. Payne, the City Coroner, to answer for their temerity in obeying the Apostle. The Coroner, with the usual sapience of office, remarked, "that the elders might leave their own lives to the care of the Lord, but the lives of children must not be played with. He must say, he liked their notion of trusting to the Lord, but they ought not to carry it too far."

We may smile, but is not the City Coroner a typical British Christian? No verbal honours are too extravagant for the Lord, but you must not trust Him too far. You ought not to be fanatical—ought you? "The horse ran off with the chaise," said a worthy Churchwoman, "and I held back all I could, but at last I had to drop the reins, and give right up to the Lord." She and the City Coroner shared the same conviction—a conviction we meet everywhere, as if God was outside us, and we independent of Him, and His providence an occasional and incalculable interference. How fond prosperous Christians are of Cromwell's counsel, "Trust God

and keep your powder dry," as if the care for dry powder was anything but a communication of the Divine Providence to the human consciousness. In God we live and move and have our being, and whether we recognise the truth or not, and whatever be our fate, we are His utterly and instantly without the most infinitesimal reserve.

Biblical infallibilists who believe in Biblical miracles and no others are, as I have said, beyond argument; but we may console ourselves with the reflection that intellectual incapacity is no bar to endless varieties of goodness and usefulness; and that many who talk sad nonsense about miracles are themselves in life and deed miracles after Christ's own heart.

Here let me make a few remarks on the old-fashioned word "miracle," to which various objections are taken now-a-days. A miracle, etymologically considered, is something wonderful; and what constitutes anything wonderful? Why, novelty—unexpectedness. Thus London is a miracle to a man who has passed his life in a village: it does not affect Londoners as miraculous who are familiar with it. Anything in short beyond the range of our former experience which excites surprise is a miracle. Photography to one who has never seen a photograph would be peculiarly miraculous; so likewise a telegram, or a steam-boat, or a lucifer match, or a penny newspaper, under similar circumstances. And sometimes our eyes are opened to the mystery of what custom has degraded to commonplace, and we discover that our life and its circumstances are a universe of miracle. Out of such a mood wrote Wordsworth:—

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that too often lie too deep for tears."

"But, sir," I hear it said, "a miracle is a violation of the laws of Nature;" and in reply I demand, What justification is there for such a definition of the word?

The question brings me at once to the pith of the matter. You do not believe in miracles, you say, because a miracle is a violation of the laws of Nature. And pray, what is a violation of the laws of Nature? and what are the laws of Nature that are supposed to be violated?

Looking for a distinct answer to these questions I came upon the following:—"A miracle is a thing that never was and never will be. When you can make five out of two and two, there will be a miracle, and not till then."

Admitted—granting the definition; but whoever compared a miracle to the manufacture of five out of two and two?

A miracle, I said was something new—the occurrence of something strange or unexpected in the course of ordinary experience. Accepting the arithmetical analogy advanced, let us



state ordinary experience as four: suddenly we find it five. How five? Not by the conversion of two and two into five, but by the introduction of a new unit to our experience. That fresh unit I call miracle.

But because it is miraculous, Is it lawless? Is it lawless because strange or unexpected? The questions answer themselves.

When miracles are discussed, Biblical miracles are usually thought of, and although I consider them by no means unique, they yet serve most conveniently as illustrations. Now nothing appears to me more obvious than the fact that Biblical miracles involved in their transaction forces and conditions which can only be represented by the elevation of ordinary experience from four to five or six by the interposition of fresh units. Our Saviour's miracles do they not only imply His extraordinary personality as cause, but, in numerous cases, an answering faith as a condition of its operation? Is it not written, "He did not many mighty works in His own country because of their unbelief?" When He cured the blind man, did He not ask, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" "All things are possible to him that believeth," was His encouragement to one sufferer; and when His disciples tried to work miracles, and failed, He gave them for reason, "Because of your unbelief," adding in proof of the prodigious virtue of faith, "Verily I say unto you, if ye say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Disbelievers in the miracles of the New Testament continually fail to take their cause and conditions into account. Because anybody cannot "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils," they argue that nobody ever did. M. Renan would actually test the veracity of the Evangelists by a repetition of their marvels in the presence of select Parisian savans! In the eyes of the late Baden Powell, a miracle was no more than an experiment in physics, which inasmuch as it was not reproducible on demand was fabulous—was impossible, being at variance with Nature and her fixed inexorable laws.

In reply I would urge, that our Saviour never promised the ability to work miracles to all and sundry, but to His disciples, to those of a spirit like His own—a spirit at unity with the omnipotence of the universe. Wherefore it seems to me sheer vanity to try to understand miracles apart from their alleged cause and conditions—as absurd as to argue that what is impossible in Iceland is impossible in Ceylon. Yet that is just what numerous sceptical critics persist in doing. In making this observation, I may appear to be dealing in utter common-

place, but, if commonplace, its neglect indicates that it is as virgin truth to the said critics.

Here I may imagine myself met by an opponent, who conceding the cause and conditions claimed as essential to Biblical miracles, would still affirm them impossible and fabulous. Well, I should answer, I do not see that I can help you. Nor am I much concerned that I cannot. It may be that your mental organisation is such that you cannot realize anything foreign to your own experience, so that if you were deaf to music you would scoff at music as noise, or preferring politics to poetry would think Tennyson and his admirers a set of triflers. It is a universal failing to hold in indifference that with which we have little sympathy, or in contempt that to which we have aversion, and I do not know how the failing can be overcome, save by the cultivation of a lively sense of the imperfection of our individual humanity. I am, however, persuaded there are many men and women of such narrow and obstinate natures, that they can never rise to the apprehension of any matter that much transcends their private experience; and to change them would require the insertion of something like a cubit into their mental circumference—an operation we may suppose impossible, if anything be impossible.

The miracles of the Gospels are frequently used by Christian apologists as arguments for Christianity, but the wisdom of the procedure is questionable: it seems a reversal of right order. I would have men believe in miracles because they believe in Jesus Christ, and so believing, they would recognize His wonderful works as the reasonable and orderly outcome of His wisdom and love—flowing from Him as naturally as water from a fountain or as light and heat from the sun.

Such a faith in Christ is the only faith worth striving after, and blessed is he that has it. You may believe in Jesus Christ just as you believe in Julius Cæsar—and, beyond historic accuracy, what the better are you? Many a wrangle have I witnessed between those who say they believe in Christ and His miracles and those who assert that miracles are impossible and incredible, and have thought the brawlers on one side as ignoble as on the other, that the faith and the unbelief were on a par, and neither of much importance, and that the combatants might change sides with slight moral detriment. As I have tried to show elsewhere, "Jesus Christ is no mere historical character, once here and gone, and henceforth an archaic type of perfection for the exercise of lively imaginations, constructive and destructive. The true use of the Scriptures is that of an index to the world. They constitute a faithful picture of the Divine Manifestation and its Antagonists; but our business is not to loiter

over the picture, but to use it as a guide to present realities; that is, for the discovery of Jesus Christ and His adversaries in our hearts, homes, country and world, where He and they are as veritably as they ever were in Jewry."

Then, too, it is the habit of many of the harder Christian apologists to deal with miracles as ending with the Scriptures. Any miracle outside Bible boards is imposture, or worse, namely, diabolic. I said to Dr. Newton one day, "The world would endure you with much greater equanimity, Doctor, if you were a convicted impostor. You could not give worse offence to Christians and Unbelievers than by healing the sick. A few cures attested by authority that could not be gainsaid would drive them frantic, and I scarcely know whether the *Record* or the *Fortnightly Review* would be most ferocious." Now, this limitation of miracle to the Bible is alike illogical and subversive of our Saviour's plain commission to His followers. His promise of the ability to work miracles was absolute, for did He not say, "These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." For myself, I am convinced that wherever there have been the conditions of Christian discipleship, there, manifest or latent, has existed the power of working miracles. If it were true that the age of miracles is past, it would only prove that the faith whereby miracles are wrought had ceased. But the fact is, miracles have never ceased. They were familiar occurrences in the Primitive Church, and whatever Protestants may say of the Roman Catholic Church, I should have to surrender confidence in human nature if compelled to brand as wholly fabulous her long, voluminous, and glorious tradition of signs and wonders. No: sift the Lives of the Saints as we will, there is a residuum of supernatural evidence of which we should shudder to think lightly.

But, granting for a moment that the Biblical type of miracle has ceased, I am prepared to take other ground, and wholly decline to admit that miracles have ceased, but have only changed form. A miracle, I said, was something new, unexpected, wonderful—the introduction of a new power to our experience. Hence, I hold that all inspirations of Divine Wisdom whereby discoveries and inventions are effected, or of Divine Love whereby human suffering is mitigated and injustice and oppression overthrown, are miracles; and that what we call Genius (the power to see and do what others have failed to see and do), is nothing but a faculty for miracles. Last century is commonly regarded as an era of spiritual death, but to my mind Wesley's

religious revival, Swedenborg's heavenly arcana, Franklin's electricity, Watt's steam-engine, Priestley and Lavoisier's chemistry, and the political life that broke forth in the revolt of the American colonies and the French revolution were miracles, were great works indeed. We at this day are impelled to seek and specially pray for revelations of physical truths, and God answers us by communicating Himself accordingly. Had Faraday, for instance, been led to covet such gifts as the Apostles enjoyed with the ardour and patience he gave to magnetic research, can we doubt that he would have received them?

And here, I venture to think, we have the true explanation of our Saviour's memorable words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." In the first place, we must think of His influence as exercised through His world-wide Church—He the vine and His disciples the branches; and secondarily, of the civilization begotten of His Church. Often when I hear Science cited against the Bible and Christianity, and even proposed as a substitute, I am driven to meditate on the inner connections of things, and to wonder where Science would have found scope for existence without the preliminary culture and circumstances provided by centuries of Christian endeavour. There are multitudes of mankind as yet without Christianity and without Science, and does it never strike us that possibly the absence of the one may have somewhat to do with the absence of the other? For myself I may say, that I begin more and more clearly to perceive that Humanity is one, and that its affections and intellect act and re-act on each other; that goodness begets light, and that light develops and stimulates goodness; and hence that the moral, intellectual, and mechanical triumphs of the Christian nations are implied in the greater works of their Lord and Master. His work in Judea was local and personal in the extreme: His work through His disciples where shall it end?

So far I might have written thirty years ago; but in the course of that time much has occurred to render credible such miracles as are described in the Bible. First, we had in mesmerism many suggestions of the possibility and method of the miracles of healing. Then in 1848 commenced those rappings at Rochester, New York, the overture of the marvellous phenomena of Spiritualism whereof so many of us are witnesses. I have heard much of the tricks by which physical movements are effected in the name of unseen intelligences, but I have yet to discover any one able to substantiate the knavish assertion.

Indeed, the inquiring sceptic into the mysteries of Spiritualism usually ends as the happy believer. I have likewise heard much of the diabolic origin and tendency of Spiritualism, but like the allegation of legerdemain, that of diabolism appears to be mainly evolved from the inner consciousness with little regard for matter-of-fact evidence. Of course there are frivolous and deceitful people who dabble in Spiritualism, as they dabble in everything sacred and profane, but how we are to escape from fools and knaves otherwise than by escaping from human nature, and from ourselves likewise, is more than I know.

Had I had no acquaintance with Spiritualism, I dare say I should have held with Carlyle that "the Hebrew Bible is before all things *true*, as no other book ever was or will be;" but what I have seen of Spiritualism, coupled with what I have heard and read, has conferred on the miraculous parts of the Bible—the parts which in our incredulous moods we find difficult to receive, a reality and an interest which otherwise they could not possess. I need not be told that because we may have frequently seen writing executed by spiritual hands that it is not necessarily true that Belshazzar at his impious banquet saw the fingers of a man trace his doom upon the wall; nor, because we may have seen heavy articles of furniture floating in the air as in water, that therefore the Red Sea and the Jordan were divided for the passage of the Israelites; but we should be dull and perverse indeed if such experiences did not dispose us to accept such narratives in a much more cordial temper.

Spiritualism, I am aware, has many anti-Christians in its ranks, but we have to remember that a host of its converts have been won from utter worldliness and utter unbelief, and it is for us to be thankful for the change so far effected. Possibly reformation would be hastened if professed Christians were a little more Christ-like towards Spiritualism, and took at least a little pains to understand it before beginning to scoff and scold. By-and-by I reckon the Churches will know better, and discover in Spiritualism an ally of inestimable worth. What a welcome message Spiritualism may convey to Christians was seen lately in the extraordinary circulation of a little book, *The Gates Ajar*, wherein a few of the most ordinary truths of Spiritualism were adapted by the adroit hands of Miss Phelps to the apprehensions of orthodox Church babes.

I shall now end, as I began, with an appeal for intellectual charity. Let us recognize as inevitable that we see many things as true that others cannot see, and that others in turn may see many things as true that we cannot see. With this recognition, bigotry should be impossible. Our intellects, we should never forget, vary in capacity and potency in every individual. I

came upon a fine sentence the other day in Miss Wedgwood's *Life of Wesley*. "Of all mental gifts," she writes, "the rarest is intellectual patience, and the last lesson of culture is to believe in difficulties which are invisible to ourselves." Finally, we may be sure that those who see most are not to be overcome by those who see least. There are people who are never tired of boasting of the simplicity of their creed, demanding admiration because they can deliver it in a sentence and enclose it in a nutshell, as if it was creditable to know the alphabet and nothing more! Churches will never be superseded by such elementary religionists. The danger of Churches consists in the rejection of truth, new or revived, and therein is their hazard from Spiritualism.

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## WHAT AN ANGLO-INDIAN HAS RECENTLY SEEN OF SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA.

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### PART II.

While at New York, Mr. Whitten visited another celebrated medium, of peculiar powers. He thus relates his

#### SEANCE WITH MR. MANSFIELD.

"*Monday, May 31st.*—Another medium of considerable celebrity in New York is Mr. Mansfield, who resides at the corner of Fifteenth Street and Sixth Avenue. He is a writing medium, and to-day we paid him a visit. Like Mr. Foster, he has no occupation besides Spiritualism, and devotes his whole time to it. In former years he was a member of the Stock Exchange, and took little interest in Spiritualism, but occasionally accompanied his wife to a *séance*, or public meeting, where the subject was to be discussed. At one of these, he was desired to practise spirit-writing for a certain number of days—I think he said thirty—but finding nothing result after what he thought a fair trial, his zeal waned, and he contemplated giving the matter up, when he became possessed of a power, of which until then he was ignorant—namely, that of being the involuntary agent through whom spirits could communicate messages in writing to those who sought them through his mediumship. All this we learnt from Mr. Mansfield himself during our interview, of which and of his manner of proceeding I will endeavour to inform you in as succinct a manner as possible.

"On arriving at his residence, we found him at leisure, and he consented to give us a *séance*. We were quite unknown

to him, and he to us, except that we knew his name, and that he was a professional medium, while ours was withheld, so that we might test his power without giving him even the advantage of knowing us or where we came from. He is a very quiet, sedate, and methodical man, about fifty years of age, and wins one's confidence by the sincerity of his manner. The room into which we were conducted was a comfortable sitting room with windows, at which flowers and creepers were growing, opening to the street. The walls were hung with pictures, some of which were spirit-drawings, while on the tables were numerous nic-nacs and quaint ornaments. Near one of the windows there was a long writing table, at which Mr. Mansfield was seated, and having explained our wish that he would give us an opportunity of testing his mediumship, he placed us so that by extending our hands and touching each other we formed a circle. More than once he changed our positions, like men on a chess-board. This being settled apparently to his satisfaction, those of us who desired to do so were invited to go to the table and write a message to, or make enquiry of, any spirit with whom we wished to correspond.

“While one of our party was so engaged, Mr. Mansfield remained in conversation with us at the end of the room farthest from the writing table, so that he could not possibly, even if he desired, see what was written. He appeared quite indifferent as to the proceeding of the writer, until he was informed the message was complete, when he desired the paper might be folded up, so that the contents could be seen by no one. The paper was in long slips, such as is used for printer's ‘copy,’ and when rolled up, the writing was hid in a dozen folds of paper. Then the ends were fastened down with gum; and without any address or writing on the outside, the letter was allowed to remain on the table. The writer then joined us, and Mr. Mansfield resumed his seat, and for a few moments gently rubbed the letter with his fingers, without moving it from the table. He then took a sheet of paper, such as that on which the letter had been written, passed the gum brush over the upper end of it, and attached the folded-up letter to it. Then he sat, pencil in hand, prepared to write, while the left hand was allowed to rest lightly on the table by his side. For some minutes he sat thus, talking to us, on any subject that was started, until presently we heard a gentle and even click on the table, and saw the index finger of his left hand move up and down, each time giving a tap on the table, and this, he informed us, indicated the presence of the spirit-agency working through him, he might call it—as it was frequently named—the ‘spirit-telegraph,’ and in his case

its presence was so infallible 'he would stake his existence on it.' He was convinced the spirit to whom the message had been addressed was there, and would, through him, reply to it. We watched with the utmost curiosity and interest, and remarked that when the finger tapped regularly and with an unbroken movement, the pencil held in the medium's right hand began to move, and then pass rapidly over the paper, line after line, the medium unheeding what was written, until the answer to the message was entirely completed; he then folded the original message and the reply together, and handed the paper to our friend, and resumed the conversation then going on. Curiosity at once prompted the opening of the roll of paper, to see the nature of its contents. It was a letter of many lines, written in a free hand, and bore at the top the usual inscription, and was signed at the end with the name of the departed spirit whose message it purported to be. We then opened the letter our friend had written, and which had been so carefully fastened up, and found it was addressed to a person whose Christian name only was written, while the message sent in return was signed with the name in full. Then we read the letter and the reply. It related to matters of a family nature, which I need not repeat; but as to the answer, it was so complete, entered so fully into the particulars on which information had been sought, and was so satisfactory, that no living being could have given a more rational or direct an answer. We were astounded at the result, which seems to pass belief—yet it is no romance. Nor was this the only instance we had of Mr. Mansfield's mediumship. During our interview six or seven letters were written by ourselves, and each was folded and sealed, put into double envelopes or otherwise secured, so that inspection of their contents was impossible.

The medium, as I have said, saw nothing of the writing, knew nothing of what had been written, or the names of the writers, or those of the dead to whom the messages were addressed, and yet the replies were as perfect in every respect as if he had known all these, was well posted in the family history, and had at his fingers' ends information which we knew he did not possess. Then again, in one particular case, an enquiry was written to a dead sister by the most sceptical of our party, requesting an expression of opinion on some important family subject. The letter was folded and sealed as before, and a reply was sent, occupying a long sheet of paper, signed with the Christian and surname of the spirit, and so entirely satisfactory and to the point as to be marvellous. The medium could not have replied of his own knowledge; he had no help from any human being; and the conclusion was forced upon us, that the



message in this and in other trials could not have been communicated without spirit agency.

"It is not necessary to visit Mr. Mansfield to obtain these spirit replies. He receives from all parts of the world letters enclosing communications from the departed, from their living relations or friends, and having obtained, in the manner I have indicated, a written reply to the messages or enquiries contained in the enclosures, they are returned unopened to the senders, accompanied by the spirit's reply. Many such letters were lying before him at the time of our visit; some were fastened up in tin, or wax cloth, or linen; or were tied up with string or ribbon, and sealed in a dozen places; indeed, every sort of device that ingenuity could invent seemed to have been resorted to, to prevent the contents of the letters being tampered with."

But of all the mediums visited by our author, none seems to have left on his mind so vivid an impression as Miss Kate Fox, the first medium for the rappings, in 1848, then but a child—the youngest in the family. We give Mr. Whitten's description of

#### A SEANCE WITH MISS KATE FOX.

"*Tuesday, June 1st.*—As I have to describe to-day the most remarkable circumstances in regard to Spiritualism that we have yet witnessed, it will be well perhaps to inform you more particularly concerning the uses of mediums, or those persons, male or female, through whom the actions of other beings are manifested and transmitted.

"The spirits assert that there is a certain emanation or effluvium possessed by mediums, which they—the spirits—can condense, and with it form a temporary material covering for their spirit-hands, with which they can touch mortals, play musical instruments, draw, write, knock, and convey tables and other objects about the room. This temporary covering, however, does not last long, and hence it is that hands and figure are seen only for a brief space and then vanish. Mediums have this effluvium, if I may so call it, in a greater or less degree. When the power is strong in the medium, the more lasting and perfect are the spirit-forms; and, in some cases, not hands only, but the full figure of the spirit-form becomes visible to mortals. The spirits also assert that their spirit-forms are like, but of a less gross nature than, the bodies they left in this world; and hence it is that Mumler, the photographer, produces spirit-photographs. I have seen many of these pictures, and in some the features are quite perfect, in others it is a mere shade of no definite form, and this arises from the medium not always being

in 'good power,' the term used by Mr. Foster when we visited him. It is not always the best educated persons who possess the greatest mediumistic power; and, to some extent, Spiritualism has been ridiculed because of the medium's want of good breeding and gentle manners; and from this circumstance, and others equally untenable, the sceptical have attempted to explain the phenomena by reference to some law of nature or wild theory, compared with which Spiritualism is clear and simple. For, I would ask, by what law of nature, or code of figures, or scientific theory, can we account for the messages communicated through mediums, conveying from the departed comfort and hope to the bereaved on earth, certainty to the doubters of the truth of the future state, and giving truthful information, with dates of past events, of which the mediums positively knew nothing, as was proved in our interviews with Mr. Foster and Mr. Mansfield.

"Miss Kate Fox is the most powerful medium in the world, so far as is known. There is jealousy even among mediums, but all give the palm to her. She is quite young—three or four and twenty, at the outside—of great simplicity of manner, and entirely free from affectation and pretence. We obtained an introduction to her, through Mr. Livermore, a retired banker of New York, and we were invited to a *séance* at the private residence of Mr. Townsend, a member of the legal profession, in Madison Avenue. Our party consisted of Miss Kate Fox, Mr. Livermore, Mr. Townsend, and our three selves. We proceeded upstairs, to the second floor, and entered a furnished room, lighted with gas—the windows, on account of the heat, being wide open. In the middle of the room was a round table in two parts, apparently a dinner table with the inner parts removed. There were besides various articles of furniture—chairs, a sofa, a book-case, ornaments, pictures, &c., and on the round table was a musical box, with a small handle on the top for turning the mechanism within; it was about as large as a bound volume of *London Society*, and weighed three to four pounds. We took our seats at the table in no particular order, each one sitting where he liked; and when so arranged we placed our hands on the table so that they touched those of our neighbours, and thus formed a 'circle.' The object of this was that all might be convinced that whatever might happen, it would be produced without the agency of any one present. We were barely seated, when the rappings commenced; our feet and knees were touched—not pushed as by an inanimate object, but grasped by a soft yet firm hand. Various questions were asked aloud by Miss Fox, as if addressed to living beings, and replies came to all in raps, 'yes' or 'no,' according to the question put. All long and

important messages or replies were communicated by means of the alphabet, which when required was called for by the spirits by knocking in some peculiar manner, which from practice was familiar to the medium, who several times during the *séance*, on hearing a knock, would say enquiringly, 'The alphabet?' or 'You want the alphabet?' and the words were scarcely spoken, when 'Yes' was replied, by three smart raps on the table; then the medium, without producing any written or printed characters, repeated the letters of the alphabet—A, B, C, &c.—until stopped by three quick raps; the letter last spoken was then written down, and she recommenced from the beginning, until again stopped, which letter was in like manner written down, and so on, until a word, and then a whole sentence, was spelled out. The process, though seemingly slow, is not so, for, from practice, the medium, when two or three letters are given, anticipates the word intended, and speaks it aloud, and if correct, 'Yes' is indicated by three raps, or 'No' by one. Very many messages and replies to questions were communicated to us during the evening in this manner; many, too, from departed relatives, repeating or confirming what we had learnt through the mediumship of Mr. Foster and Mr. Mansfield, and being in every respect as intelligent and satisfactory as any document written by a human hand.

"More than once, some of the party had to change seats, the 'circle' not being complete; and the spirits having intimated that, if possible, they would make their presence visible to us, the gas was lowered without being actually put out. In a few moments the musical box began playing irregularly, as if turned by the fingers of a child; then there was a slight grating on the table, and we heard the box playing while floating in the air—sometimes near us, actually touching our heads, then lying on the sofa or the floor, and up at the ceiling, or beneath the table at our feet. We all sat without moving to detect any sound in the room; but not the slightest rustle was heard, beyond the tune of the musical box. I sat next to Miss Fox, and am certain that she moved neither hand nor foot. We had been sitting thus for about an hour, when a message came to 'open the table.' This, we were informed, was preliminary to the spirits being seen. The ends of the table were drawn apart some six or eight inches, and we again placed our hands so that they touched our neighbours on either side, and having sat a short time in perfect silence, waiting and listening, there came from the opening in the table bright luminous bluish lights, phosphorescent in character; sometimes they were undefined and like a bluish-grey mist, at others they were of a globe or egg shape, in which case the light was more condensed

and bright, and was surrounded by a cloudy light, which followed its movement about our heads until it vanished. The most definite forms, including the surrounding light, were about half-a-yard in diameter; they floated with soft and graceful speed from one point to another, and came so near as to touch our faces had we not shrunk back as they approached. None of the lights were visible longer than about a minute; two or three came at once, and having floated away at various points, were succeeded by others equally mysterious and beautiful, and of such a brightness as might have been seen from any part of the room. We expressed a wish to see a spirit-hand or form; but the evening was not wholly favourable for such a demonstration, and it was promised that our wish would be complied with on another occasion. More than once it was observed that as the lights passed away they seemed to form a halo round the head, or hover near the person of Miss Fox, and so were lost to sight. The *séance* did not end here; as during the evening there was a remarkable communication in writing, purporting to be from Benjamin Franklin, who has on several occasions been seen in spirit-form by Miss Fox and others. The message now sent was written by the spirit guiding Miss Fox's hand, and was transcribed backwards from the right to the left of the paper, which had to be held up to the light and read from the reverse side to make out its contents. The writing was in a bold, clear hand, totally distinct from Miss Fox's handwriting. She had no knowledge of what was being written. She was talking to us the whole time; and, although it was dark, the lines were as regularly written from side to side as could be done in a good light. But this, remarkable as it was, is less so than the appearance of the spirit lights. It is not uncommon for mediums to see spirits clearly; but, so far as I am aware, Miss Fox is the only one whose mediumistic power is so great as to enable spirits to appear even as we saw them. Before we separated, the musical box was brought back to the table, the head of one of our party being gently touched by it as it passed. We then heard it reach the table, brought there by no human hands."

The day before his departure from America, Mr. Whitten had

#### ANOTHER SEANCE WITH MISS KATE FOX.

"*Tuesday, July 6th.*—It had been arranged that we should be present at another *séance* with Miss Fox, the celebrated medium, and we were invited to meet her as before at the house of our friend, Mr. Townsend, in Madison Avenue. Our party consisted of our host and hostess, Miss Fox, and our three selves.

We met at about eight o'clock in the evening, and proceeded to the back drawing-room on the second floor, which was furnished as we had seen it, and as I described it on the previous occasion; the windows were wide open, and the gas was burning brightly. We had no sooner taken our seats round the table, and placed our hands lightly upon it, than the spirits manifested themselves by rappings, at first so gentle and distant as to appear to proceed from the interior of the wall or beneath the floor, and then to gradually approach nearer and nearer until they were in our midst, on, under, and *in* the table. Then I felt my feet and knees touched gently and caressingly, as with living fingers. There could be no mistaking the pressure, which was neither heavy nor hard, as would have been the case had it proceeded from an inanimate object, or by machinery; it was the touch of a soft and pliable hand, and at the same time the other members of the party felt the pressure quite as distinctly as I did.

"We were all at liberty to look beneath the table as often as we pleased, but at no time, not even when we felt the spirit-hands touching us, could we see anything moving. The medium was the least interested in the manifestations, neither expressing surprise, anxiety, or being even concerned at the phenomena, which we could not but consider as marvellous.

"A flow of conversation was kept up on general subjects—of our tour and approaching voyage to England, of passing events in America, and such like, and during the whole time there would be rappings somewhere or other in the room, sometimes delicate and gentle, then bold and loud, and occasionally positively startling from their violence. The rappings were not confined to one spot, but were sometimes round the walls of the room, up at the ceiling, near the door, at our sides, and under and on the table at which we were seated; neither were the raps heard at one spot at a time only, but in a dozen places at once; and, let it be remembered, there were two bright jets of gas burning all the while in the room. These strange and extraordinary manifestations continued for some time, when a message was rapped out to the medium to produce writing materials, and accordingly three or four sheets of paper and a pencil were placed upon the table, and, not knowing what might transpire or be communicated, I was requested to mark each sheet or write on them, so that they might afterwards be recognised. This was done, and presently a message came that Mr. C—— should give a sheet of paper and pencil to the spirits; but before doing so, he was required to cover his hand, and one of the party bound a white cambric handkerchief round his right hand, and securely fastened it to his wrist. The

fingers, although covered, were quite free inside the handkerchief, and he then took a sheet of paper and held it just beneath the table, and in a few moments he exclaimed—‘They are pulling it out of my hand! they have taken it away!’ at the same time exhibiting his hand, empty. Next he took a pencil, held it in a similar manner, but quite tightly, and this was also taken as he exclaimed—‘It is gone! they have got it!’ As a farther test of the spirit power, and to facilitate their writing, it was suggested that something with a hard and flat surface should be given them, and one of the party took from the mantelpiece a large photograph mounted on thick cardboard with glass in front, but no frame, the edges being secured with gilt paper; and this Mr. C—— took in his hand, still covered with the handkerchief, and held under the table. We were all observant of what was taking place, and we listened attentively, knowing that if it were dropped from his hand, it would fall to the ground heavily, and probably be smashed. But nothing of the kind happened. The picture was forcibly taken from his hand, and carried uninjured to the floor, and placed on the carpet near the paper and pencil. Then we heard the rustling of the paper, as if it were being moved or written on, and on taking it up these words were there: ‘I will try.’ This being in reply to what I had written on it: ‘Write your name, please.’ No name was written, but only the words above quoted, and it is possible the paper was removed from the floor too soon, and before the intended message was complete.

“All this occurred in a brightly-lighted room, and while the hands of every person present were on the table, from which they were not for a moment removed.

“But this was not all. Our friend was requested to place his still covered hand under the table, and having done so, he felt it being touched, and told us the spirits were unfastening the knots by which the handkerchief was secured to his wrist, and in a few moments it was entirely removed, and he showed his hand bare; and afterwards, when the handkerchief was restored, it was found to be knotted at the corners, the work of the busy spirit-hands.

“After these manifestations there was a considerable interval, during which we retained our seats, and kept up a continual conversation, and when any one hazarded an opinion, or wondered if this or that were true, the spirits, with singular promptness, rapped a reply, ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ Then there would be a period of silence, broken only by startling raps on our chairs or elsewhere about the room, until presently the spirits communicated through the medium that they would try and manifest themselves visibly to us, and the room was

darkened, so that the luminous lights might be the better seen. The table was slightly opened, and we completed the 'circle,' by each touching the hands of the persons seated on his right and left, and so we awaited the appearance of the spirit lights. They soon came, rapidly; sometimes appearing away from the table, near the side of the medium, and then—and these were the most satisfactory—they came from the ground, and rose through the opening in the table, and ascended above our heads, moving towards us, and then retreating, until they finally floated away, and dissolved from view. These spirit-lights were precisely such as we saw before, and were of a globular form, of a bluish-grey colour, and semi-opaque. We saw no hand nor the lineament of any human features, but we could not for a moment doubt the reality of the vision, and we were equally confident that they were neither produced by any one of the party present nor by unseen confederacy.

"These manifestations having ceased, our lady friend exclaimed: 'Something has touched my eye;' and in another moment: 'They have put the picture in my hand!' and at the same instant Mr. C—— cried out: 'They have given me the pencil; they have put it in my mouth!' This was the case; the picture had been gently slipped into her hands, which were on the table, and the pencil was returned to him in the manner indicated; and finally the spirits gave us this message: 'God bless you all! We will be with you on your journey.' The gas was again lighted, and the *séance* was at an end."

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## ON THE MATERIALISTIC TENDENCIES OF THE AGE.

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### LETTER TO A CLERGYMAN.

My dear Sir,—I am truly glad to find from your recent note that you have had the patience to bear with me while so freely expressing the thoughts suggested to my mind by the perusal of your new volume;\* and to me, I assure you, it is full of very suggestive matter, and exceedingly enjoyable on that account. The chapter on education, especially, is not only suggestive, but amusing, when read from my own particular stand-point—a point from which, I flatter myself, I see a little of both sides of the question, stereoscopically, as it were. You,

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\* *Christus Consolator*, by ALEXANDER MACLEOD, D.D..

on your side, it would appear, only see—and that through a theological haze—the spiritual side of the question; while they, the men of science, on their side, only behold—and that through the no less imperfect medium of inductive philosophy—the material side. You claim to proclaim a gospel which appeals not so much to a man's reason as to his spiritual intuitions; while they proclaim what they believe to be the only gospel possible to be grasped by the intellect, a knowledge of the facts of the material universe. Now, the fact is that ye are looking at the development of the truth of God from opposite points of view, consequently you are each of you teaching only half the truth.

That which has been taught by the Church for hundreds of years is only a half gospel; and necessarily so, seeing that it is only in this our age that man's intellectual nature is becoming fully developed. Yet, notwithstanding this great intellectual change, the Church which claims to know all about the human mind and its wants goes on in the old rut, just as when the race was in its intellectual infancy. In that infancy faith was everything—authority was law; but *now*, knowledge dominates both, and threatens to overturn all the religious systems of the past, simply because they fail to harmonise with our knowledge of facts, or to furnish that reliable evidence of their truth which the intellect demands. Of this, however, there is in my opinion not the remotest danger, so long as men retain that duality of nature with which God has endowed them. Though all religious creeds and systems were abolished to-morrow, man would still be a religious being, and begin *de novo* to build from intuition a religious system or systems—just as the birds from instinct rebuild the nest that has been destroyed. Why is it that, in times of religious excitement the majority of those affected are women, or uneducated men? Just because, in these, the emotional dominates the intellectual.

I think then that I am justified in characterising the war now going on between science and religion as a conflict betwixt the head and the heart—between that which *thinks* and that which *feels*—and on that account a very unnatural war indeed.

Evidently, then, what is wanted is a gospel that shall satisfy both—that shall find acceptance with the head, in the first place, and thence pass into that state of holiest of man's higher nature, the heart. Such a gospel, my friend, is already making itself heard, and the John the Baptist of its advent is Modern Spiritualism. It is quite true, as you say,\* that the tendency

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\* "From the books of science, then, no word can ever be drawn which shall bring light to the human race, concerning the cloud which rests on the grave. Their books admit no miracles; and the highest miracles are resurrec-



of modern science is to deny the possibility of miracle; but is this to be wondered at when the Church is practically doing the same thing, and has been doing so from the Reformation, by teaching; that the so-called supernatural ceased with the age of the apostles, and that, too, in flat contradiction to the teaching of Christ himself, when he said, "And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Now, if these are the outward tokens by which we are to recognise the true believers, where at the present day are we to find them? But the truth is, the supernatural has never ceased to manifest itself, for the light of its presence may be traced throughout all history; but especially so in this our age of Christian, no less than scientific, scepticism. At this day, when these astounding phenomena are denied and scouted by those who ought to have carefully watched over and encouraged them, is it to be wondered at—seeing that they have been driven out of the Church—that they should occur, albeit in their lowest forms, outside the Church? So fallen, so gross and infidel has the Church become in this respect that I believe if Jesus Christ were to appear in its midst, working the old miracles upon the sick, the blind, the deaf, the maimed, and even the dead, he would be branded as an impostor, or as one in league with the powers of darkness.

You characterise the materialistic tendencies of our age as a tide that shall one day turn, and flow back to the shores of faith!\* Now, on the contrary, I look upon them as a God-given impetus to the human mind, that it may rise and free itself from the leading-strings of a traditionary faith, while it reaches forward to a more comprehensive and surer faith, built upon the facts of spirit manifestations.

Our men of science, it is alleged, have all but exhausted the material field, while some of them have entered upon the border-land of the spiritual, by their investigation of the im-

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tion and immortality. Of life after death—of a future world—of an unending existence in that world—we can never hear from the teachers of science; and they are at this moment in arms against the whole region of the miraculous, in which resurrection and immortality lie."—*Christus Consolator*, p. 131.

\* "The sea of faith is at the ebb just now; but it is not for ever. The creeks and bays of human life in this land shall be filled as before. In the swing of the great forces of the soul from revelation to science, from faith to reason, our lot has been to be cast in a time in which the set or drift of thought is towards science. And it cannot but happen to an age which is caught in such a tide, that the eyes of men shall be blinded to the facts they are leaving behind, and open only for those which are before."—*Christus Consolator*, p. 136.

ponderables. Nay, a few, such as Varley the electrician, Wallace the naturalist, De Morgan the mathematician, and Crookes the chemist, have crossed it, and have held converse with the angels. Besides this, the subject has been taken up and formally investigated by the Dialectical Society of London; and now that the report of that investigation is about to be published, we may reasonably expect that the attention of men of science will be still farther drawn to the subject. Moreover, we are satisfied that it will do more to convince the modern mind of the truth of the soul's immortality than all the sermons that were ever preached on the subject. Spiritualism does not profess to teach a new gospel; it is only new in so far as affording new evidence of its truth, in the shape of phenomena that can be tested by the senses. Still, it is just the same old but ever new truth about God's fatherhood and goodwill to man; proclaiming, as of old, man's immortality, and the happiness or misery that are the inevitable result of our actions here in the body. Teaching, as of old, the love and forgiveness of the Father, flowing to his children *inside*, not *outside*, his eternally fixed laws—not independent of, but in accordance with them. In this way, you will perceive, the gospel according to Spiritualism meets the wants of man as a whole; his intellectual nature no less than his emotional—his head no less than his heart.

Another and no less important feature in it is that it reveals to us much of the real nature and surroundings of the life to come, and that from the experience of countless numbers and varieties of spirits; thus affording timely warning to the wicked and careless, while giving every encouragement and consolation to those whose lives are in accordance with the will of God, and his still small voice within them.

And here allow me to say that we too claim to live under the arch of the tri-coloured bow;\* but we give to its colours a much wider and, as we think, a more rational interpretation. In every child of humanity we behold, in more or less degree, an incarnation of Deity; though only fully manifested in Jesus Christ, who worthily occupies the high position of King of kings and Lord of lords to the human family. We also believe that atonement, in the form of suffering, is the inevitable consequence of incarnation; moreover, that self-sacrifice is a sacred duty, which ultimately yields the fruits of happiness to ourselves

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\* "Incarnation, atonement, resurrection—these are the three colours in this rainbow. By these our life here has been overarched; and they shine to tell man, and the poorest of men, of a Divine Saviour near us, in the midst of us, in our hearts, in our homes, in our places of toil,"—*Christus Consolator*, p. 153.

no less than to others. But, above all, we glory in the great fact of resurrection—not of the natural, but of the spiritual body—as taught in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul, and of which we receive daily confirmation from our friends in the spirit-world.

But now I know that, like many others of your class, you will be ready to urge the objection, that these so-called spirit manifestations are not of a nature to impress us that they are sacred in their character; but, on the contrary, so low and trifling, that the more intelligent view them with contempt, if not with positive disgust. Well, granting that some of them are of this character, may they not on that very account be the very best fitted to convince the modern scientific mind, seeing that they come within their own special province, the world of matter and of sense? The turning of a rod into a serpent, the speaking of an ass, or the wetting of a piece of wool with dew, were neither very high nor very dignified manifestations of the supernatural; yet they were, undoubtedly, the very best that could be given in the circumstances. Besides, the character of the manifestations, and also communications, very much depends on the character of the medium, and even upon the condition of mind he or she may be in at the time of their occurrence. Just as in the case of King Saul, in whom we at one time find a spirit of prophecy, and at another a spirit of assassination, seeking the life of the man who was doing his best to charm it away by the magic of sweet sounds. But it will be quite time enough to meet your objections when you make them; nor need I longer dwell on a subject with which you have so little sympathy. It may interest you to know, however, that not a few of the Nicodemian school of Spiritualists are to be found among clergymen, who peruse our literature and attend *séances* privately. It is to be hoped that by-and-bye they too will speak out their convictions, and so help to restore to the Church those spiritual gifts which Christ himself promised should remain with it, as a living token of its power and authority.

Meantime I am, dear Sir,

With kindest regards, ever yours,

JAMES NICHOLSON.

218, Eglinton Street, Glasgow.

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A NEWSPAPER PARAGRAPH says that table-turning and spirit-rapping have recently made their appearance in Lahore, much to the astonishment of the natives of that place.

## STRANGE DOINGS AT THE HOUSE OF A BAPTIST MINISTER.

*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

DEAR SIR,—I am tolerably well read in the literature of Spiritualism, and can safely say that the newspaper extracts now enclosed refer to a series of occurrences, as wonderful and as well authenticated as any on record. The "Moon Ghost," because of its persistency, and the extensive means used for its identification, is specially interesting to Spiritualists; and should any well connected and meritorious account of it be published, I shall take pleasure in sending you a copy. At one period, a full battalion of Lee's soldiers, armed to the teeth, were posted in and around the house, but their presence did not seem to interfere with the ordinary phenomena set in motion by the spirits. The occurrences at the house of the Rev. Mr. Thrasher attract a great deal of attention, and are described from time to time in the newspapers. The names of Mr. Thrasher and Rev. Mr. Cox ("Lexington"), the latter of whom has given to the public a careful *resumé* of the transactions, are well known in this section, and no one thinks of questioning their veracity. Those manifestations are only a month old; the "Moon Mystery" has continued two or three years.

Yours in the truth,

H. KEMP.

Petersburg, Virginia, U.S.A.,  
16th February, 1871.

The *New York World* says:—"A letter has been received at Richmond, which gives an account of the most extraordinary operations of a supposed 'ghost' at Buchanan, in Botetourt County, which has caused considerable excitement and alarm among the inhabitants, in the suburbs of which reside the Rev. G. C. Thrasher, whose house has been for six weeks the theatre of many curious and ghostly exploits. The hobgoblin, or whatever else it may be, commenced operations by extracting from the reverend gentleman's corn-crib, through a padlocked door, a sack of corn, and pouring it out some twenty paces from the crib. Then night after night it came, performed its fantastic tricks, opened windows barred on the inside, doors locked and guarded, scattered furniture, and the utensils of the culinary department hither and thither, and went away unperceived, despite the fact that each night the house was guarded inside and around by vigilant neighbours armed to the teeth, and eager to capture or detect the bold hobgoblin who had time and

again passed through their ranks unseen. Three evenings ago Mr. Thrasher went over to Dr. Wood's residence, and while there heard his little children, whom he had left at home, ringing a bell, and at the same time heard a violent knocking at the door, and on approaching, being armed with a shot-gun, and accompanied by Dr. Wood, distinctly heard his little son inquire of his unwelcome visitor what it wanted. A reply was given, but in an undistinguishable mumble, resembling, as Dr. Wood describes it, a confusion of voices coming from the ground. Both gentlemen affirm that not the least trace of any person or thing was visible, although every nook and corner of the premises were carefully examined; nor could any person in the house produce the sounds they heard, no one being at home at the time, except his three little children, the eldest a brave little boy of twelve summers, who with pistol in hand, was interlocuting the hobgoblin who has puzzled the greyest heads in Buchanan. Some two weeks ago Mr. Thrasher was watching in his yard, armed with a double-barrelled shot-gun, when, as he says, something like a thin shadow, bearing resemblance to a human form, passed by him, but swiftly as the wind, and instantly disappeared. This is all that he has seen, and, strange enough, not a track or trace has ever been left behind, although night after night, in moonshine and darkness, in calm and in storm, the mysterious stranger has come, played his curious pranks, the half of which I have not told, and went—where? Every nook has been examined time and again by many persons, and there cannot possibly be any subterranean retreat for flesh and blood. The surrounding grounds are plain and clear, and it seems impossible that any person could pass from the house unperceived, even in partial darkness. And if it is the devil unchained and permitted to roam at will 'seeking whom he may devour,' is it not singular that the person he seizes upon should be a Baptist minister?"

The correspondent of the *Lexington Gazette* gives the following as the substance of a letter from Mr. Thrasher:—

"He says that for five days during the week previous the manifestations were frequent, varied, and violent. Brickbats, old bones, chips, billets of wood, ears of corn, stones, &c., were thrown about the house in the most mysterious and unaccountable manner, and again and again everything would be turned topsy-turvy in the parlour and chambers, without their being able to detect the agent.

"One day, two young ladies being at the house, they determined to use every effort to ferret out the mystery. Accordingly they arranged the parlour, locked all the doors, sent Anna Pring to the kitchen with Mr. Thrasher's little boy to watch her, and

carried all of the keys to Mrs. Thrasher's room. They waited but a few minutes, and returned to find that the doors had been opened, the books from the centre table scattered over the floor, the lamps from the mantelpiece put on the floor, and things disarranged generally; and to increase the mystery, they found a strange key that would neither unlock or lock any door in the house, sticking in the key-hole of the parlour door.

"[By the way, the key which was taken off a week ago, was returned several days afterwards.]

"One day Mr. Thrasher himself left the dining room, carefully locked the door, and went upstairs to his wife's chamber. Just as he was about to enter he heard a noise downstairs and returned immediately, not having been absent from the room more than *three minutes*.

"He found the door open, the furniture disarranged, and all of the dishes from the press scattered over the floor. One day the clock was taken from the mantel-piece and put on the floor.

"Major Paxton says that he fully satisfied himself that the little girl, Anna Pring, could not have anything to do with it, and saw enough to convince him that there is some unexplained mystery connected with the affair. He says that one night while he was there a number of young men were on guard, and that the knocking at the door being very violent and frequent, they resorted to every stratagem and made every effort to detect it in vain. He also saw chips flying about the house in the most inexplicable manner. Mr. Thrasher says that they had not been disturbed at all from Friday evening up to the time he wrote on Monday.

"Some of the good people of Buchanan still believe that the disturbance is caused by the little girl, Anna Pring, aided by some daring confederate or confederates outside—and there are certain circumstances which strongly point in that direction; but this theory does not explain how the outside confederate could do many of the things which Anna Pring could not possibly have a hand in. Mr. Thrasher and his wife and others who have watched her closely are fully persuaded of Anna's entire innocence, and are completely in the dark as to the cause of the disturbance. It is hard to conceive of a motive which could influence either the little girl or any outside party to keep up these disturbances for so long a time, and it is certainly very strange that the perpetrators have not been caught.

"Many of the tricks are very similar to those of the famous 'Moon Ghost,' and we should be inclined to think that the same gentleman moved his quarters up the river, but for the fact that he has recently appeared again at Mr. Moon's notwithstanding his written pledge that he would disturb them no more."

As an appropriate counterpart to the above, we give the following from the last issue of the *Scottsville Register*:—

“The ‘Moon Ghost’ on last Monday night was more rampant than usual. His thumping and rapping on and around the house kept all of the inmates awake. *He, she, or it* is no humbug of a ghost. Many of our readers do not believe what has been said of this mysterious affair; but we can assure them that one half of the mysterious and unaccountable movements of the ghost have not been published. We do not believe that the old detective Hays, reputed to be the best in the United States, could detect the intruder, or account for his being willing to give so much labour night after night, through rain, snow and mud, in order to annoy the unoffending occupants of the house. It is evident that he is not a thief for he steals nothing.”

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### A NEW MEDIUM.

ON Friday, February 17th, a few friends, including Mr. Chinnery, Mr. Shorter, Mr. Gleadstones, and Mr. Alsop, met at the house of one of their number to witness manifestations through a new medium, a Mr. Williams, of 61, Lamb's Conduit Street, Holborn. Spirit-voices were heard loud and clear; the pressure of spirit-hands—soft, firm, and caressingly—was felt by nearly all present; a spirit-form was distinctly seen by one of the company; a cornopean was brought from a distant part of the room and placed in the hand of a gentleman who plays that instrument; and a heavy candelabrum, weighing probably from 12 to 14 pounds, was brought from the end of the room opposite to the medium and placed noiselessly on the table. These were the chief incidents of the *séance*.

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### PRESENTIMENTS OF DEATH.

Asked in his thirty-sixth year to write a requiem, Mozart sadly replied, “It will be my own then;” and he died as soon as he had finished it. “Did I not tell you truly,” he said, musing over the score as he lay dying, “that it was for myself that I composed this death-chant?” Flechier, the great French divine, dreamt that he was to die, and ordered his tomb. “Begin your work at once,” was his final instruction to the sculptor, “for there is no time to lose;” and no sooner was the house of death finished than its intending tenant entered upon possession. “What is to be the subject of your next design?” asked a merry party of friends of Hogarth. “The end of all things,” was the

reply. "In that case," said one, jokingly, "there will be an end of the artist."—"There will," rejoined Hogarth, with a depth of solemnity that was strange in him. He set about the plate in hot haste, broke up his tools when he had finished it, entitled the print "Finis," and a short time after its publication lay stretched in death. "Poor Weston," exclaimed Foote, as he stood dejectedly contemplating the portrait of a brother actor recently dead, "Poor Weston! Soon others shall say, 'Poor Foote!'" In a few days he was borne out to his burial.

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## Obituary.

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### THE LATE ROBERT CHAMBERS, LL.D.

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WE deeply regret to hear of the death of this estimable friend. We find the following short notice of him in the daily papers:—

"We regret to announce the death, on the 17th March, at St. Andrew's, of Dr. Robert Chambers, of the well-known firm of publishers. He had been gradually sinking for some weeks past, so that the melancholy event was not altogether unexpected. The deceased was born at Peebles in 1802. He received a good education, and was intended for the Church; but his tastes did not lie in that direction. He, early in life, commenced a small bookselling business in Edinburgh, and was not long before he appealed to the world as an author. One of his first efforts in literature was a work on the *Antiquities of Edinburgh*, which attracted favourably the notice of Sir Walter Scott. In 1832 he joined his brother William in establishing the business which, as the firm of "William and Robert Chambers," has attained to considerable eminence. For the journal which bears their name he wrote nearly 400 essays on social, philosophical, and humorous subjects, during the first twelve years of its issue. He also published a work on geology, entitled *Ancient Sea-Margins, as illustrative of Changes of the Relative Level of Sea and Land*, and several volumes on the romantic portions of Scottish song and story. One on the "Rebellion" of 1745 appeared in *Constable's Miscellany* upwards of thirty-seven years ago. The *Domestic Annals of Scotland* was a subject treated by him in another work with great success, and the well-known *Book of Days* will be long associated with his name.

"With his brother, Mr. William Chambers, he is well known as the founder of cheap periodical literature in this country. He was also credited with being the author of



*Vestiges of Creation*, which in its day created a sensation somewhat similar to that with which Mr. Darwin's works have been received in more recent times. Besides *Chambers's Journal*, his name is also associated with several useful and popular treatises on educational subjects."

To this we have to add, that he was for the last twelve or thirteen years of his life an earnest inquirer into, and believer in the marvels of both old and modern Spiritualism. A man with no superstitious reverence, and with all the bent of his mind running counter to such a belief, we could hardly, in the range of our celebrated men, choose one whose opinion, founded on long inquiry, reading, and personal observation, should have greater weight. He received nothing on trust, and was a most careful investigator, and he had the advantage of constant intimacy with Mr. D. D. Home. With him he had repeated sittings, and was well acquainted with the whole range of phenomena which occur in his presence. But he also pursued the inquiry with other mediums, till he had arrived at entire conviction. He had a large and well-selected collection of old and new works on the subject, and was thoroughly acquainted with its literature. Often have we heard him pity the ignorance with which the subject has been assailed in the press and in society, and good-humouredly lament that it should not be inquired into before its unceremonious rejection, and he was well aware of the state of the scientific mind which was the bar to inquiry. Being largely embarked with his firm in literary business, he did not hold himself at liberty to make public his belief, for fear of injuring their prospects; and it says little which the world should take credit for, that a man of his mark should be deterred by its frowns from stating what he knew as a great truth. Let it be known that a great and good man may be prevented by the besotted ignorance of his fellows from telling them an unwelcome truth.

Besides the works above enumerated, Dr. Robert Chambers was the author of an *Essay on Testimony*, which was reviewed in our pages at the time, and which he intended as a protest against the illogical treatment of the subject of Spiritualism, and at the same time as the promulgation of the true nature of evidence and the best method of inquiry. He was also the author of the preface to Mr. D. D. Home's book, called *Incidents in my Life*, the title of which he selected, and the proof sheets of which all passed under his careful revision. Besides this, he contributed the appendix of phenomena to the same work; and to the last he maintained his friendship for and confidence in Mr. Home, and he made an affidavit in his favour in the suit of "*Lyon v. Home*." In his *Book of Days*, he gathered together

a number of records of spiritual phenomena, which he had collected in his varied reading of the annals of Scotland, and which it was his object there to preserve for future use when the time should come for them. He was to the last a consistent and munificent supporter of the several movements in favour of Spiritualism, and the Harley Street meetings, just concluded, were subscribed to by him. With all his learning, and the calls upon his time, we have heard him say on several occasions that the *Spiritual Magazine* was the only periodical which he always read from cover to cover. This is no small honour, and should be no small encouragement to us to persevere. In him we have lost one of our best and ablest friends and coadjutors; and in closing this short tribute to his memory, we can only repeat our grief at his loss, and the hope that he is now reaping the reward of a honourable and useful life.

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#### PROFESSOR AUGUSTUS DE MORGAN.

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THE ink of the preceding notice was not dry when the tidings arrived of the departure of another great spirit. At one o'clock on Saturday afternoon, 18th March, Augustus De Morgan died at his residence, 6, Merton Road, Primrose Hill. How frequently do such events occur in pairs, and sometimes in trios!

Mr. De Morgan was born in 1806 in Madura, a small island to the north-east of Java. His father was an officer in the British army. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he was Fourth Wrangler in 1827; but retired from further honours owing to aversion to subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. He was qualifying himself for the Bar, but the institution of the London University in 1828 opened for him a more congenial career. He was appointed Professor of Mathematics, which office he resigned in 1831, resumed in 1836, and retained till 1866. He was singularly successful as a teacher, and a host of pupils will reverence his memory.

It would be superfluous in this place to recount Mr. De Morgan's achievements as a mathematician and logician, or his multifarious labours as a writer in general science and letters. Suffice it to say that wherever his handiwork appeared it received the respect of all whose respect was best worth having. As was once observed by a generous antagonist, "On whatever subject Professor De Morgan advances an opinion it is original and commonly beyond appeal." If genius be the faculty of seeing with one's own eyes instead of with other people's eyes, Mr. De Morgan was emphatically a man of genius. The commonest matters and driest themes acquired freshness and life

under his touch. To fools and charlatans he was a terror: humourously and without ferocity he handled pretentious absurdities, but so handled them that they rarely stirred again. He was liberal, but earnest as liberal, and where his convictions were clear, inexorable. When, in 1866, the chair of Moral Philosophy in University College was vacant, he promoted the election of the Rev. James Martineau as beyond question the best man in the empire for the post; and when the authorities preferred in his stead a representative of mere physiological psychology, he did not hesitate to give the strongest proof of disapprobation by the resignation of his own professorship.

To Spiritualism he rendered eminent service by the well-known preface to Mrs. De Morgan's admirable volume, *From Matter to Spirit*. It is a piece of writing that will not soon be forgotten, and is highly characteristic of its author. He was unable to yield full adhesion to our common belief that physical manifestations are effected by unseen intelligences; but his hesitation, we often thought, was due rather to a sense of inability to maintain a case against all objectors, after his usual fashion in other matters, than to actual scepticism. His conviction was, at any rate, as decided as that of Robert Chambers himself, that the manifestations were veritable signs and wonders worthy of the most serious attention. And when we consider that two men of the calibre of De Morgan and Chambers united in bearing such testimony, we can easily disregard the opposition and derision of those who either know nothing or will know nothing of the phenomena whereof they speak so recklessly.

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## Notices of Books.

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### MOUNTFORD ON MIRACLES.\*

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"THE age of miracles is past" has long been a dismal commonplace; and not only so dismal, but so irrational, that it is scarcely surprising that it should begin to be superseded by the bolder assertion, that "There never was an age of miracles; for the laws of Nature are invariable and inviolable, and a miracle is therefore an impossibility. The age of miracles was nothing but an age of ignorance and credulity."

Many who say, "The age of miracles is past," inwardly or practically accept the second assertion. They outwardly profess to believe the miracles of the Bible, but resolutely ascribe to

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\* *Miracles Past and Present*. By WILLIAM MOUNTFORD. Boston: FIELDS, OSGOOD & Co., 1870.

imposture or superstition all supernatural relations outside its boards. Take the multitude of Scotsmen, for example: they fight for the absolute veracity of every shred of the biblical narrative with the ferocity of tigers; but, as if to make up for this excess of faith, their contempt for extra-biblical wonders is almost inexpressible. Relate to an Ayrshire ploughman any of the ordinary experiences of Spiritualists, and you will forthwith evoke a display of incredulity, which the hardest headed of London savans could not surpass. It is obvious that such a habit of mind is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of the Scriptures; and it is questionable whether their diviner influences are not worse than neutralised by such remorseless advocacy.

Many thoughtful Christians are gradually approaching the conclusion, that what is supernatural in the Bible is only to be explained and defended by references to experience. If the age of miracles be past, it is because we have lost the spirit whereby miracles were wrought: restore the spirit, and miracles will re-appear. Such is the ground assumed by Mr. Mountford; and on this ground it would be difficult, without an air of exaggeration, to describe the feats he accomplishes—the sophisms he dissipates, the difficulties he removes, and the light he communicates. His strength is discovered in a constant assertion of facts—of facts which are the stronghold of every Spiritualist. Strange it is, that the matter-of-fact man should popularly be identified with the cut-and-dry materialist or positivist, when the truth is that the sharply defined philosophy wherein he boasts himself, is attained by an unscrupulous disregard of inconvenient facts, and a determination to see and recognise nothing outside a prescribed area. The typical obscurantist is a bigoted religionist; but the character is frequently more flagrantly developed in a Comtist, who will know nothing save what suits him. But we are at fault, if we confine our observation to the Comtist. He is by profession a phenomenal philosopher, limited; but there are many of his company under the Christian name. As Mr. Mountford remarks:—

“Often, in the very arguments they employ, writers in defence of the Christian miracles evince their own latent anti-supernaturalism. Continually, in theological works, miracles are defended as realities by those who have no perception whatever of spiritual laws, and no sense whatever of the miraculous. How much infected by materialism persons may be who fancy themselves to be very spiritual in their views, is shown in the attempt which frequently is made to render miracles credible by analogy with Babbage’s Calculating Machine. This wonderful machine is said to work accurately through

a long series of figures, till suddenly it throws up a figure which is out of order, and which cannot be accounted for, but which, it is supposed, may possibly result from some undiscovered law of mathematics. And it is gravely suggested, that in obedience to some occult property, the great machine of Nature has here and there, and especially about Palestine, stopped its regularity for an instant, and thrown out a miracle at a time fore-ordained in the making of the clockwork. Anything rather than suppose the intervention of God, or angel, or spirit! Anything rather than a miracle, or being out of the order of Nature, even though really it should be in the order of Heaven! A thousand miracles of the strangest origin may be brought in at the back gate, if only they can be used for barring the front door of the intellect against admitting the possibility of signs and wonders having ever been fresh from Heaven—ever having been supernatural—willed, that is to say, in the spiritual world outside of Nature, and at the very seasons respectively of their being shown."

Concerning our Saviour's miracles, and their vindication as manifestations of a superior Divine Order, much that is excellent has been written in our own day, as for example by Archbishop Trench, the Duke of Argyll, and Dr. George Macdonald; but Mr. Mountford acquires a strength of argument and evidence beyond that of the rarest intellects, by his frank recognition of the reality of contemporary spiritual phenomena. From his own experience he is satisfied "that some spirits have power to come into the realm of Nature some little way, and so as to be able to make some signs, such as the moving of objects, the ringing of bells, playing on a harp, and touching a person, and such also as taking possession of the body of some living person more or less completely, and using the hand for writing, and the voice for speaking, and the eyes for seeing with, after the manner of a mesmeric clairvoyant, only much more successfully. Also, he knows that the death of a person can be announced, and that even also minute peculiar circumstances attending it can be detailed some days before there could be even a possibility of such information being obtained by natural means. Also, he could tell of having seen, and examined, and having seen vanish, ghost-hands—hands of spirit, which had been materialised as to surface at least, and which had thereby been made capable of looking and doing, for a little while and to some little purpose, like hands of flesh and blood."

It is obvious that in such experience, the miracles described in the Scriptures obtain a basis in the mind, for which the ablest abstract considerations would prove but an indifferent substitute. As Mr. Mountford observes:—

“According to the phenomena of Spiritualism, the constitution of human nature is manifestly still the same as what the lawgiving of Moses pre-supposed, and as what the revelation of Jesus Christ was given to meet; and still the same as it was at Athens, Rome, and Antioch, when the Gospel began its struggle with idolatry. And it is only with ascertaining the place where the first hearers of the Gospel stood mentally, that one can catch with full force the words which were addressed to them. And anything to-day which might, more or less, enable a student to read the Epistles of Paul in that state of mind about the universe which Paul addressed would be or should be a great blessing. And the Christian expositor, who is regardless of the philosophy which attaches to the case of that ‘certain damsel who had a spirit of Pytho,’ and who was exorcised by St. Paul, would seem to be a little out of the light in which the Epistles of Paul ought to be read.”

Indeed, when the truth is thus stated, it begets a reasonable wonder how the New Testament is so patiently revered and borne with by so many who completely exclude from their conscious intellectual atmosphere any influence from that ever-present and ever-active spiritual world which the Apostles so naturally and so habitually recognised. And when such Christian unbelievers venture to mock at the outward demonstrations of contemporary Spiritualism, the right answer might often be, “Such demonstrations, physical and trivial, are probably given to meet *your* hardness of heart, and for your sake will probably develope and multiply, for nothing less and nothing better would be likely to shake your obstinate materialism.”

Mr. Mountford's book is, in almost every respect, a first-rate one, and we only wish it could secure free currency in England; but its references to Spiritualism would, we fear, deter even such a publisher as Strahan or Macmillan from touching it; and there really is little use in printing even the best matter, if there are not means at command to ensure its sale and circulation. Mr. Mountford's style is peculiar. It suggests much more than it describes, and advances with such strides, that readers of slow apprehension are apt to feel jerked and exhausted with more than a few pages at a time. There are, however, no obscurities in the volume; nothing to which ordinary intelligence is not equal; and it would be easy to select from it a long series of fine sayings, clear insights, rebukes to bigotry, encouragements to faith, and cheerful prophecies; but we should rather refer our subscribers to Mr. Mountford for themselves. They will assuredly leave him with many new ideas, and beyond all, with renewed confidence in the strength and antiquity of the foundations of Spiritualism.

## Correspondence.

### THE ONE SUBSTANCE IN NATURE THE BASIS OF ALL PHENOMENA.

*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR,—I have been deeply interested in a clearly and concisely expressed article in the present (February) number of the *Spiritual Magazine*, questioning as to whether all phenomena can be considered the result of the physical forces of nature; but the matters in question are so involved and subtle, that a full reply would certainly require a more lengthy article than I could expect to be inserted. I will merely, therefore, refer to a former communication, in which it was shown that leading Spiritualists have expressed their opinion that, fundamentally considered, there may be no *essential* distinction between spirit and matter, and consequently there can be no real distinction fundamentally between the substance of what is termed a physical body and a so-called spiritual one; and hence, as both are developed conditions from the same matter, one cannot in reason affirm that the one form of matter is not equal to what we have assumed, on account of our erroneous distinctions, to be the essential and sole functions of the other, and a form of substance fundamentally distinct; but if there is no real difference, of course our conclusion would be erroneous and misleading; and if there be a spirit, we should have to consider as to its nature and source as a physical development, and what are its inter-relations with the grosser body in which it seems during life to be enclosed, and of which we may assume it to be a development, as the most beautiful flowers spring from the seemingly most unlikely source. The almond blossom, for instance, from the rude, leafless stem; and unless we knew that to be a fact, who could conceive it possible? Again, take the instance of the butterfly, that pretty emblem of the soul—one of the most beautiful and delicately caparisoned of living creatures: who could have supposed that it was an actual transformation or development from the grub we had seen feeding upon the cabbage leaf, and out of the conditioned substance of which this beautiful creature has been formed and fashioned, and its vital powers supplied—by the condition of forces, if you will, or by any other supposed principle of growth and development—for if the vital nature or force be not stimulated and supplied from the food that is eaten, and as altered and stimulated by surrounding physical conditions as light, heat, and air—whence comes it? Again—if there be but one fundamental substance in nature, we have no reason for supposing that brain may not

produce sensation, and thought, and memory, as well as an unknown condition of the same substance in the material of the supposed spiritual body; and I do not see that the objections in the one case are obviated in the other—for in either case the phenomena of consciousness must come of what is not consciousness, and must be the consequence of the automatus action of its physical or substantial source, a matter that we may observe and experiment upon every moment of our lives.

The cause of the permanent sense of identity on physical principles—and we agree, I think, now that there are none other—I have gone into in a former article; and which explanation includes the present question about memory, which one kind or condition of the substance can certainly no more account for than another; but correlative facts in nature may, as in the matters indicated in my former article.

To conclude, I may say that the correlations of force do not account for all the facts in nature—magnetism, for instance—nor do I see any *à priori* reason for discrediting the existence of spirits, or for the existence of “permanent residuary forms.” A diamond, for instance, under ordinary conditions might continue to exist, for aught we can tell, to all eternity; and other forms might, even supposing a perpetual changing of their substances, as the visible body does, but without inheriting the principle of decay.

As for the notion of Re-incarnation, so forcibly condemned by “W. H.,” I must say it rather perplexes one; for if I am somebody else that has gone before me as a departed spirit, certainly that same spirit cannot also be communicating to me from the world of “disembodied spirits,” though, of course, always supposing a substantial form of their own, partaking of the infinitely subtle but nevertheless the common substance and basis of all phenomena.

I hope it will be seen that I have written the above purely in the love of truth, and in the endeavour to find some fundamental and common ground on which Spiritualists and the so-called men of science may meet without such a violent shock on either side, as though approach or reconciliation was absolutely out of the question; or, rather, I have followed Mrs. Hardinge’s admonition, that we should seek a scientific basis to Spiritualism and psychology. Anyhow, I know that many Spiritualists go a long way in regard to the position I have explained; though, as I said in the outset, the matters indicated are so complicated and involved, that a full exposition of my views exemplified would occupy more space than I have any right to claim.

Yours, &c.,

HENRY G. ATKINSON.